

## First Two Influenza-Associated Deaths of 2017-18 Season

As influenza (flu) activity is increasing in Los Angeles County (LAC), the LAC Department of Public Health has received the first two reports of flu-associated deaths for the 2017-2018 season. Both decedents had underlying health conditions that made them susceptible to complications from this disease. Although most people will recover without any major issues, flu can be a serious illness. Influenza activity is low but rising in LAC, so now is an excellent time to get vaccinated. Public Health and the CDC recommend flu vaccination for everyone greater than 6 months old.

During the week of 11/5/17-11/11/17, LAC has seen some local flu activity. Rhinovirus and enterovirus, the two most common causes of the common cold, are also circulating. While some illnesses from flu A 2009 H1N1 and flu B have been identified both locally and nationwide, early reports show flu A H3N2 to be the most commonly identified strain. [Seasons where influenza A H3N2 predominates are typically more severe than A H1N1 or B seasons, and these seasons also are more likely to affect older populations.](#)

	2017-2018		2016-2017	
	Week 45*	YTD <sup>†</sup>	Week 45	YTD
Positive Flu Tests/Total Tests (Percent Positive Flu Tests)	18/580 (3.1%)	279/10,930 (2.06%)	19/1,243 (1.5%)	120/10,469 (1.1%)
Percent Flu A/B	83/17	84/16	84/16	92/8
Community Respiratory Outbreaks	0	0	0	2
Influenza Confirmed Outbreaks	0	0	0	0
Pediatric Flu Deaths‡	0	0	0	0
Adult Flu Deaths	2	2	2	2

\*For the 2017-2018 season, week 45 starts 11/15/2017 and ends 11/21/2017.

†The influenza surveillance year started August 27, 2017.

‡Confirmed influenza death is defined by a positive lab test, ILI symptoms, and clear progression from illness to death.



### Antiviral Therapy Can Help Prevent Severe Complications from Flu

People at higher risk for complications from flu should seek medical care as soon as they begin to feel ill, even if they have been vaccinated. [Antiviral medication](#) like oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (Relenza®) can shorten the duration of illness and can reduce the risk of complications or death. These medications work best when taken within 48 hours of becoming sick, but can still be beneficial if used later in the course of illness.

### Complications: Who's at Risk?

Most people who get the flu will recover, but the flu can cause serious illness and death. [People who are more at risk](#) of serve complication include:

- Children younger than 5, and especially those younger than 2
- Adults 65 years and older
- Pregnant women (and up to 2 weeks postpartum)
- Residents of nursing homes and other long term care facilities

Certain health conditions can also put people at risk of complications from the flu, including:

- Asthma and chronic lung (e.g., COPD and cystic fibrosis)
- Chronic heart disease
- Blood disorder such as sickle cell disease
- Type II diabetes and other endocrine disorders
- Kidney or liver disorders
- Metabolic disorders
- Weakened immune systems
- Obesity

Source: [www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high\\_risk.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm)

